

Breaking Cycles, Strengthening Families

The San Diego County Breaking Cycles Program

Kim Allen, Probation Director

Cynthia Burke, Ph.D., Director of the Criminal
Research Division,

San Diego Association of Governments

What is Breaking Cycles?

- Designed by the San Diego County Probation Department and the Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council.
- Based on OJJDP's Comprehensive Strategy approach to reduce crime.
- A multi-disciplinary, collaborative program of delinquency intervention.
- Combines community intervention with incarceration.

Project Background

- SB 1760 Legislation
- Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council
- Local Action Plan
- Challenge I Grant
- Implementation of Graduated Sanctions

Program Strategy

- Intervene early through community intervention strategy
- Prevent at-risk youth from becoming delinquent
- Provide a continuum of graduated sanctions
- Incapacitate when necessary to hold offenders accountable
- Improve the justice system response to delinquency

Program Goals

- Enhance community safety
- Prevent and reduce juvenile crime
- Break the cycle of substance abuse and violence
- Promote family self sufficiency

Program Results

- Reduced delinquent behavior
- Improved school behavior
- Improved peer selection
- Reduced substance abuse
- Improved family functioning

Project Components

- Prevention
- Graduated Sanctions
- Research and Evaluation

Prevention Component

- Goal is to reduce the number of youth entering the justice system by supporting and empowering families to access and receive community resources in a timely fashion

Prevention Component

- Between March 1998 and June 2002, over 12,000 primary clients were referred to the five Community Assessment Team (CAT) sites
- The “typical” client is 14 years old and is most likely to have been referred for school-related or family issues
- 40% of CAT clients are female

Prevention Component Evaluation Results

- Less than 1% of participants have a sustained petition during program participation
- Two-thirds successfully complete the program
- More likely to be engaged in school and have support in the community
- 98% satisfied with services received

Graduated Sanctions

Philosophical Foundation

- All partners have a commitment to:
 - “What Works” intervention strategy
 - Reduced reliance on incarceration
 - Community–based, family-centered therapeutic interventions
 - Multi-disciplinary collaboration

Graduated Sanctions

Philosophical Foundation, con't

- Family involvement and parental participation
- Substance abuse and mental health treatment, upon request
- Services that are responsive to gender and culture
- Offender accountability

Target Population

- WIC 602 wards of the Juvenile Court
- Ages 13 to 17.5 years
- Ordered to six months or more custody time
- Male and female juvenile offenders (excluding sex offenders, arsonists, developmentally disabled)
- Medium to high risk for re-offending

Commitment to Breaking Cycles

- First recommended by the Probation Department Screening Committee
- Commitment by Court Order
- Program Commitment Lengths:
 - 150 days
 - 240 days
 - 365 days

Program Features

- Multi-disciplinary assessment
- Family-centered, strength-based case plans
- Graduated Sanctions continuum of responses
- Reassessment

Assessment and Case Plan Development

- Institutional assessment centers
- Multi-disciplinary assessment team
- Parent participation
- Development of a case plan
 - Considers risk and protective factors
 - Links risk and protective factors to program placement and interventions

Graduated Sanctions Continuum of Responses

- Breaking Cycles Programs and Services
- Institutional Placement Programs
- Community-Based Programs
- Home-Centered Programs
- Therapeutic Interventions and Services

Multi-Disciplinary Team Approach

- Collaborative approach to service provision and therapeutic intervention
 - Probation staff
 - Alcohol & Drug Specialists
 - Mental Health Practitioners
 - Youth & Family Counselors
 - Community-based service providers

Juvenile Forensic Services

- Mental Health Services in Probation Facilities
- Treatment Evaluation Resource Management (TERM)
- Polinsky Children's Center
- Hillcrest House
- Evaluation Unit
- Breaking Cycles

Juvenile Hall

- Initial Assessment
- Physical Health Services
- Emergency Screening Unit
- Crisis Team
 - Assessment
 - Medication Evaluation
 - Coordination of Care
- Spectrum

Juvenile Ranch Facility

- Juvenile Forensic Services
- Short Term Offender Program (STOP)
- Therapeutic Community
- Drug Dormitory
- Relapse Beds
- Regular Program

Girls Rehabilitation Facility

- Juvenile Forensic Services
- Spectrum
- Occupational Therapy
- Literacy Program
- Family Counseling
- Parenting Counseling
- Alcohol and Drug Counselor

Youth Day Center

- Central San Diego and San Marcos
- Spectrum
- Psychiatric Coverage
- Family Counseling
- School
- Treatment of Wards Embracing Recovery (TOWER) Program

Reflections

- Day Treatment
- Positive Peer Counseling
- Psychiatry
- Spectrum
- SAY, San Diego, and the YMCA
- Building Effective Solutions Together (BEST)
- Treatment of Wards Embracing Recovery (TOWER) Program¹

Community Unit (CU)

- Supervised by CU until completion of Breaking Cycles commitment
- Deputy Probation Officer
- Community Family Monitor
- Alcohol & Drug Counselor
- Youth & Family Counselor

Alcohol & Drug Services

- Assessment
- JRF/GRF
- Reflections/YDC
- Community Unit
- Teen Recovery Centers

Parents and Family Involvement and Participation

- Parent Advocate
- Parent Orientation Program
- Parent Participation in Assessment
- Parent Workshops
- Parent Advisory Board
- Parent Handbook
- Breaking Cycles Spring Fair and Customer Service Survey

Reassessment: The Dynamic Response Process to Change

- Natural program movement and graduation
- Reassessment as a collaborative, multi-disciplinary intervention
- Offender accountability – ability to move youth in and out of custody
- Substance abuse relapse beds – a substance abuse intervention strategy

Graduated Sanction Component

- Directly links behavior and consequences, rather than ignoring less serious delinquency until more serious violations occur
- Compliance results in reduced sanctions, while intervention is escalated for non-compliance

Graduated Sanctions Component

- Continuum of services from Community Unit and Day Center to in-custody rehabilitation facilities
- Between July 1997 and June 2002, over 6,000 juveniles were committed to Breaking Cycles

Graduated Sanctions Outcomes

- Decreased use of custody beds
- Reduced recidivism and substance abuse
- Fewer out-of-home residential placements
- Improved customer satisfaction

Graduated Sanctions Evaluation Results

- Less likely to be arrested or have a sustained petition
- More likely to successfully complete probation
- Have fewer risk factors and more protective factors

Lessons Learned

- Enlist partners and build collaborations
- Have early consensus on definitions of success
- Secure flexible funding
- Allow for enough time to engage clients

Lessons Learned, continued

- Utilize multi-disciplinary teams
- Implement regionalized services
- Provide intensive alcohol & other drug-related treatment
- Address educational and mental health needs
- Provide after-care services

The Human Side of Breaking Cycles

- Success stories
- Breaking Cycles works!

For More Information

- Contact the San Diego County Probation Department
 - Kim Allen (858) 492-2328
- San Diego Associations of Governments (SANDAG)
 - Cynthia Burke, Ph.D. (619) 595-5361